

THE GOLDEN AGE OF SPAIN

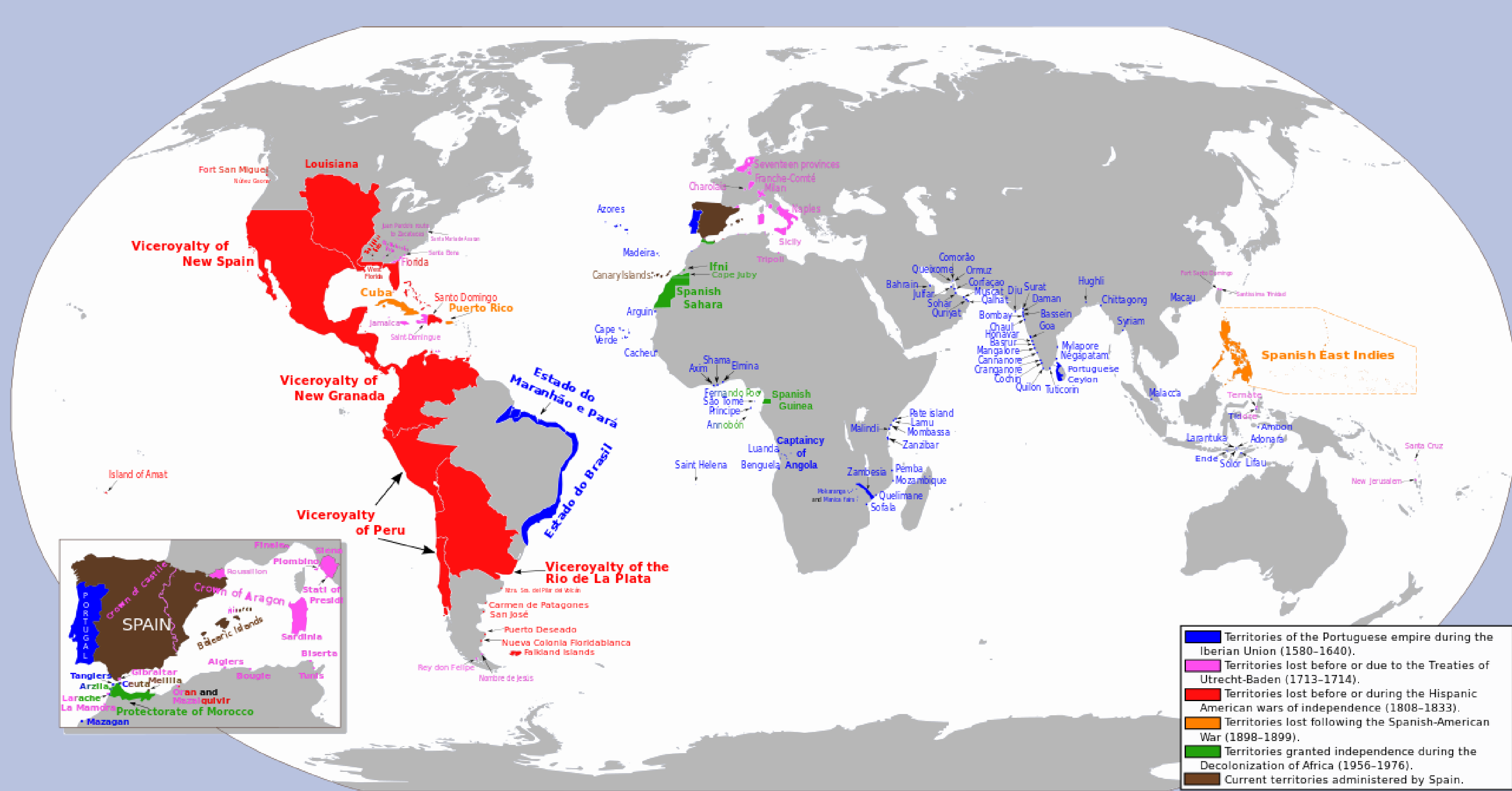
Contributions to a Changing World

The Golden Age of Spain was an era of political consolidation due to the rise of the Habsburg dynasty. United through the marriage of King Fernando of Aragon and Queen Isabel of Castile, Spain emerged politically stable from a period of prolonged warfare. With the defeat of Al-andalus (Muslim Spain) and expulsion of the Jews, the many Christian kingdoms came together to form a unified state.

The Spanish Empire arose in a period of social, religious, and intellectual change in which plants and animals were indexed, new understandings of human anatomy developed, and the Inquisition sought to protect Spain's Catholic identity.

Spain's enemies described it as corrupt and cruel, critiquing the Inquisition's methods, Spain's treatment of indigenous peoples, and the excesses committed against Protestants in post-Reformation religious wars. This negative portrayal of Spain, known as the 'Black Legend,' outlasted the empire and pushed Spain into the shadows of history, so that many people today do not recognize the importance of Spain to Renaissance Europe's history.

This exhibit seeks to undo the marginalization of Spain from European history, not to glorify its actions, but rather uncover how the Spanish Empire helped shape the modern world.



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Contextual Timeline

